



The Beating Incident

You are the company commander of an elite unit and you are part of an elite battalion.

You have been in Iraq for eleven months now. You love command and you love your boss. He has charisma and is the best leader you have ever seen. Everybody respects him not only because of his two time BZ selections but because of his "take no prisoners warrior ethos."

He is a winner and you like being on the winning team as do all of your LTs. On several occasions he called a "huddle" and told you and the boys (LTs) to kill more insurgents. "They only respect power so let's get some respect."

Over time you and the rest of the leadership have come to learn that when you were exceptionally harsh on the towns people the attacks from the insurgents slowed down.

You like the power and some times you feel like a war lord of sorts. People fear you and respect you. Because of recent insurgent activity, your unit imposed a curfew on the town and after 2000hrs all persons are stopped and questioned. At 2200hrs – 2 hours passed the curfew, a vehicle is stopped. They seem innocent enough and are released. The Battalion Commander orders you over the radio to stop them once again and detain them for questioning. To your surprise, the Battalion Commander himself comes at midnight to question the two men detained. He grew impatient with the men and started beating them, then breaking their fingers until they showed signs of cooperating. He then released them and said "I bet no body will miss curfew tomorrow night."

Afterwards the Battalion Commander "huddled" us up and assured us that he had our back and that we had to stick together. He was committed to bringing us all home alive. Then he looked us in the eyes and asked if we had his back? Are you on the team? We have to stick together.

A couple of weeks later, some Army investigators showed up questioning some of the troops about the incident. None of the leadership seemed to cooperate with the investigation. Later the boss "huddled" us up again and said that if we were questioned to tell them everything except the beating part. They didn't need to know that, besides, that was internal "team business."

QUESTIONS TO DISCUSS WITH YOUR SOLDIERS...

1. It's your turn to be questioned by the investigators. What do you do?
2. As an American Soldier, how does this incident make you feel?
3. What factors **should** you consider as you consider your courses of action?
4. Discuss how the units' climate and culture will influence this situation.
5. Discuss this vignette solely from a rules based point view.
6. Discuss this vignette solely from an outcomes based point of view.
7. Discuss this vignette solely from a personal value based point of view.